



Fostering The Community, Inc.
Wethersfield, CT
www.fosteringthecommunity.org

TESTIMONY ON SB 310

AN ACT REQUIRING THE COMMISSIONER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON CASEWORKER RETENTION AND PERMANENCY OUTCOMES.

via email to kidtestimony@cga.ct.gov

**By: Jennifer Fell, President
Fostering The Community
March 8, 2022**

Dear Chairman Anwar, Chairwoman Linehan, Vice Chairwoman Welander, Ranking Member Senator Kelly, Ranking Member Representative Dauphinais, and Distinguished Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Children Committee:

As a foster parent, I have experienced the most painful heartache of my life watching a child in my care turn 4, then 5, then 6, then 7. This child waited anxiously each day to find out where and who will become their permanent home. They were unwaveringly hopeful that a system that whisked them away from their home would carefully protect their fragile wounds and make them whole again.

This child had dealt with more uncertainty, fear, neglect, abandonment, and abuse than anyone should. They needed certainty, support, protection, nurturance, and love from a stable home environment.

Yet, this child's case passed through worker after worker without an apparent reason why. With each hand-off losing some of the history of the case...as well as the history of the child. And with each hand-off, the child was becoming statistically more vulnerable to a more extended stay in foster care.

With each new caseworker came a new set of supervisors who would never meet the child but often change their case plan based on their fresh eyes review.

And while these changes slow down the momentum, despite meticulous effort to avoid it...I watched this child's identity shift from "kid" to "foster kid."

Amongst the paper shuffling, sign-offs, and passing days.... watches as other kids seem carefree. They look on afraid to relax and enjoy the present...because they have no confidence in their future.

We know that the actions presented by this bill will allow for tracking and evaluation of the permanency processes within the state of Connecticut. We know that DCF is well aware of how turnover impacts permanency. Pre-pandemic children in care were finding permanency at a rate of 27% in the first 12 months when the long-standing goal was 40%. It's time to track the data to make solid decisions about improving the ongoing challenges with meeting permanency targets.

Members of the committee, this bill is not to shame or condemn the work that DCF has done. It's simply requesting that critical information be collected to help ensure timely permanency for foster care because they only get one childhood.

I am writing on behalf of Fostering The Community, Inc. to testify in strong support of SB 310. Thank you for allowing me to participate in the important discussion of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Fell', written in dark ink.

Jennifer Fell, President